

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9101

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 12588

LIMDIS

FOR ASST. SECRETARY HABIB FROM LEHMANN

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: EFIN IMF IBRD

SUBJECT: INDOCHINA DONORS MEETING

REF: SWEET MEMCON OF SEPTEMBER 17, 1974 ON DISCUSSION OF PARIS
INDOCHINA CONSULTATIVE GROUP MEETING

1. REF MEMCON STATES THAT FORMATION OF A DONOR GROUP FOR RVN IS OF THE UTMOST IMPORTANCE TO US. HOWEVER, IT ALSO STATES THAT THE US WOULD NOT BE OPPOSED TO THE FORMATION OF A GROUP SOLELY FOR LAOS "IF THAT WERE THE BEST THAT COULD BE ACHIEVED AT THE MEETING."

2. WE COMPLETELY AGREE WITH THE FIRST STATEMENT, SINCE IT IS CLEAR
(A) THAT THE OVERWHELMING US INTEREST IN INDOCHINA IS IN THE RVN AND
(B) THAT OUR ABILITY TO SIGNIFICANTLY LESSEN THIS COUNTRY'S DEPENDENCE

ON US IN THE NEXT FEW YEARS DEPENDS ON LARGE AMOUNTS OF AID FROM OTHER DONORS AND (C) THAT THE PRINCIPAL OTHER DONORS (NOTABLY JAPAN) FACE POLITICAL DIFFICULTIES ESPECIALLY IN SUBSTANTIALLY INCREASING THEIR AID LEVELS IF IT IS NOT PROVIDED IN THE CONTEXT OF A MULTILATERAL

EFFORT.

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3. I AM AMAZED AT THE STATEMENT QUOTED IN THE SECOND SENTENCE OF PARA ONE ABOVE. IT WILL ALMOST CERTAINLY BECOME KNOWN QUICKLY TO OUR OPPONENTS WHO HAVE FRIENDS IN THE IBRD AND THUS GIVE AWAY THE BALLGAME BEFORE IT EVEN STARTS. AFTER 18 MONTHS OF EFFORT, INCLUDING DEPUTY SECRETARY INGERSOLL'S INTERVENTIONS WITH MCNAMARA, THIS WOULD BE A DISGRACEFUL OUTCOME. ENDING UP WITH AN IBRD SPONSORED LAOS GROUP AND AN ADB SPONSORED DRV GROUP BUT NO GROUP AT ALL FOR THE RVN WOULD SEEM TO CAST THE LATTER IN A PARIAH ROLE WHICH IS POLITICALLY UNACCEPTABLE. ON THE OTHER HAND WE HAVE SHOWN ON A NUMBER OF RECENT OCCASIONS WHAT CAN BE ACCOMPLISHED ON VIETNAM ISSUES IF THE US STANDS ABSOLUTELY FIRM AND EXPENDS SOME EFFORT TO MAKE ITS POSITION STICK. I STRONGLY RECOMMEND THAT WE PROMPTLY GO BACK TO THE IBRD, CLAR UP ANY "MISUNDERSTANDING" CREATED IN THE SEPTEMBER 17 CONVERSATION UNDER REFERENCE AND MAKE IT ABSOLUTELY CLEAR THAT THE CREATION OF A VIETNAM SUB-GROUP IS A MUST AS FAR AS THE US IS CONCERNED.
LEHMANN

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